

# The Right Arm of the Warfighter

## Providing Logistics Support in a Nonlinear Battlefield

*Lt. Gen. Kathleen M. Gainey, Director of Logistics, J4, the Joint Staff*

**In today's operational environment, there is no rear area. The battlefield is nonlinear and noncontiguous.**

**A**s military members move from a base to a forward position, they need a way to continue to receive ammunition, food, new equipment, and even clothing—a task made challenging when supplies have to travel to different countries, across rough and dangerous terrain, and to places where it is difficult to pinpoint the warfighter's exact location. Lt. Gen. Kathleen M. Gainey, the current director of logistics, J4, the Joint Staff, is working to ensure the logistics workforce is trained and prepared to operate in today's joint interagency and multinational environment. She noted the metrics of success for a logistician should be measured through the eyes of the final customer: the warfighter. The general spoke further on today's joint logistics environment in an October 2008 interview with *Defense AT&L*.

**Q** Your position as the director of logistics, J4, on the Joint Staff has been called the *advocator* and the *integrator*. Can you give us an overview of your roles and responsibilities?

**A** My primary role is that of an adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs for the entire spectrum of joint logistics, which includes maintenance, supply, transportation, medical, engineering, and contingency contracting fields. I review cross-functional requirements, and provide the chairman my best military advice and an awareness of the joint logistics environment. As the sponsor for the joint logistician and an integrator within the joint logistics community, I look at the joint logistics requirements of the combatant command-

ers and the chairman and then provide support and input to the Services, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the multinational community, other government agencies, and key leaders. As the integrator for the community, I bring together all of the logistics “voices”—OSD, Services, combatant commanders, and our international and interagency partners—into a singularly focused enterprise. Finally, I work with the Services, functional combatant commanders, and agencies to streamline defense logistics and improve interoperability and effectiveness. My unwavering objective is meeting the joint warfighter’s needs.

**Q**  
*You recently took over as the director for J4. What are your priorities for the next two to three years?*

**A**  
Before I start with the priorities, one has to understand the end state. I want to explain where we are going before we chart our path.

Our end state is to provide integrated logistics capabilities to the joint force commander. Ultimately, this gives the joint force commander maximum flexibility to achieve a mission because he has the ability to share resources among the Services. We aren’t there yet, but over the next two to three years, the J4 will focus on three initiatives. These initiatives were developed through extensive partnering with the Services, combatant commands, OSD, and agencies, and they will direct joint logistics toward an integrated future state.

First, we will develop a common end-to-end defense supply chain framework and measurement system. This initiative addresses the processes, technologies, organizational cultures, and decision authority structures that reinforce optimization of the supply chain.

In the current state, we optimize the supply chain segments. The problem is that we have seams that degrade the overall logistics performance and the ability to get required resources to the right place at the right time, as measured at the point of consumption. There is no owner or responsible entity for the end-to-end supply chain with commensurate decision-making authority that can impact fiscal and process changes that will ultimately optimize end-to-end performance from the consumer’s perspective. We allow ourselves to be driven by what we can measure and what portion of the segment we control. This subcomponent mentality and independent authority structure has resulted in disagreement on the consensus definition of “start/source” and “end/point of consumption” of the end-to-end supply chain. We need to evaluate how well we put the sock on the foot of the forward deployed soldier.

I lived this as the commander of the Defense Distribution Command. We were great at shipping customer demands

quickly. Often, we filled them well ahead of required delivery dates. So my metrics at the command looked great. However, we were not effective to the warfighter. The warfighter in the hot, dusty desert in Operation Iraqi Freedom had no ability to sort and store those items at the rate I was sending them. Our doctrine had not caught up with our peacetime practices of delivering dedicated shipments to supply points at major installations. As a result, the supplies got to their destination late, or not at all. U.S. Central Command and the Defense Logistics Agency adapted and created a route plan to group units at central destinations and aggregated supplies into packages called “pure pallets,” and they changed our metrics, not just the individual steps. We need to have a holistic approach to the defense supply chain so that the entire process is optimized, and so that we understand the second and third order impacts of every change.

Second, we will recruit, develop, and sustain logisticians that can effectively work in a joint interagency and multinational environment. When I was a captain, I never had to think about multinational or interagency partners. No longer! Now, our logistics officers work hand-in-glove with State Department-led provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq and Afghanistan and with our coalition partners throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. We have already made great strides in this effort with the newly established Center for Joint and Strategic Logistics at the National Defense University. Joint logistics has been taught for years by our Service schools, but there has never been a mechanism to standardize the training throughout DoD or take on broad education initiatives for joint logistics. I am very excited about the potential to make a real difference in the community with this effort, and to get us all speaking in the same language and for it to have the same meaning!

Third, we need to incorporate life cycle management as a key decision factor throughout acquisition and sustainment processes. This initiative addresses the significant sustainment cost to the Services, given that weapon systems are often in service longer than the originally designed life cycle. During the design and early acquisition phase, cost tradeoffs among mission performance, development time, and life cycle sustainment are made.

Given that life cycle costs are deferred and not considered as part of the cost of acquisition, sustainment may be the cost that is traded off to facilitate approval of acquisition. In order to mitigate that shortcoming, this initiative takes a holistic approach to life cycle management from the earliest stages of acquisition through the sustainment processes across the Services, industrial base, and consumer communities. Another key component to this initiative is our role in supporting and championing the models that are used in developing key performance parameters. I think we can better support the Services in this area and, ultimately, drive effectiveness with efficiency as a byproduct and not the starting point.

## Lt. Gen. Kathleen M. Gainey, USA

Director for Logistics, J4, the Joint Staff

Lt. Gen. Kathleen M. Gainey received her commission as a second lieutenant through ROTC in 1978 after graduating from Old Dominion University with a Bachelor of Science degree in special education.

Currently, Gainey is the director for logistics, J4, the Joint Staff.



Her previous commands include 5th Heavy Boat Company, Ford Island, Hawaii; 6th Transportation Battalion, Fort Eustis, Va.; 7th Corps Support Group, Bamberg, Germany; Defense Distribution Center, New Cumberland, Pa.; and the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, headquartered at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

In 1987, she attended Babson College, Wellesley, Mass., to complete her Master of Business Arts in contract management and procurement. In July 1989, she attended the Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and she is a 1997 graduate of the Army War College.

Gainey's other assignments include chief of the Container Freight Branch, Military Ocean Terminal Bay Area, Military Traffic Management Command Western Area, Oakland, Calif.; program analyst, U.S. Armament, Munitions, and Chemical Command, Rock Island, Ill.; executive officer, 2nd Area Support Group, 22nd Support Command; S-2/S3, 702nd Transportation Battalion, Saudi Arabia; division transportation officer, 24th Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.; special assistant to the chief of staff, Army, Washington, D.C.; chief joint operations division, U.S. Transportation Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill.; director, Force Projection and Distribution, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4, Washington, D.C.; and deputy chief of staff, Resources and Sustainment, Multi-National Force-Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Her awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, the Bronze Star Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters. Her badges include the Army Staff Identification Badge.

Q

*There has been a great deal of discussion about transforming the internal structure, processes, and culture of joint logistics. How is the joint logistics environment changing, and how it will affect future combat operations?*

A

We used to say that combat service support forces (logistics, medical, personnel) and noncombatants such as contractors and DoD civilians would not be exposed to combat; they would operate in the rear. In today's operational environment, there is no rear area. The battlefield is nonlinear and noncontiguous. Our enemy knows no bounds; he will target soft areas and lines of communication. At one time, we could study the enemy—he was predictable and easily identifiable—but that is no longer possible. Now, with irregular warfare more prominent, we have had to adjust how we fight and how we support the warfighter. We are in a protracted war in which persistent conflict is becoming the new normal. This will require DoD to look at force structure adjustments that will give the warfighter a sustained force.

While the warfighting landscape and requirements continue to evolve, there arises a new set of imperatives for the joint logistics environment. These are things we must accomplish in order to achieve success: unity of effort, joint logistics environment-wide visibility, and rapid and precise response.

Regarding unity of effort, it is unlikely that we will ever truly have unity of command over logistics. Therefore, unity of effort, absent unity of command, is essential. In order to achieve it, we must define the processes, roles, and responsibilities. The processes must be common where applicable, must be transparent, and must share the same output metrics.

Visibility—More than in-transit visibility and total-asset visibility, we need visibility over the requirements, resources down to the retail level, and processes throughout the community. As for rapid and precise response, we need to meet the joint warfighter's demands of speed, reliability, and efficiency—but all through the lens of effectiveness. And we must measure this from the warfighter's perspective. Our metrics need to reflect how well we put the sock on the foot of the soldier or the dungarees on the sailor.

Q

*The idea has been put forth to transform the J4 into a learning organization that is able to respond and adapt, and even anticipate the constantly changing needs of the joint force commander. What is your vision to achieve this goal?*

A

To be a learning organization, we need to inculcate flexibility and agility into everything we do and think. To be responsive to the warfighter, we need to think like warfighters. We need to ask what would we do and how, and then lay out a concept



as the plan is developing so that we constantly adjust the plan as the requirements change.

To do this, we must:

- Understand the commander's intent and reach out to experts as needed
- Remain linked to operations and plans as they unfold so we can be flexible enough to adjust the concepts and support plans as requirements evolve
- Believe we are empowered to create solutions and execute them in the absence of guidance.

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**Q** *Regarding Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, DoD is currently engaged in two very different theaters, logistically speaking. What are some of the different lessons learned about joint supply and joint logistics emerging from these environments?*

**A** I recently traveled to the U.S. Central Command area of operations with Service component logistics chiefs and representatives, and it really allowed all of us to see how we are supporting the joint force commander. We visited several key service capabilities within Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Afghanistan, which gave us the opportunity to identify areas where we need to re-evaluate our strategy.

The Afghanistan area of operations is vastly different from Iraq. The dispersion of units, the isolation of many of the bases, and difficulty in traversing from one location to another is magnified tenfold. We need to tailor

support packages to account for those differences and challenges. Iraq solutions often do not work in Afghanistan.


There was significant value in touring the area of responsibility with a joint perspective. Some of the takeaways included the importance of capturing lessons learned to codify joint interoperability. We also committed to look at core joint doctrine to create standard procedures and terminology, and also to procure common equipment where practical.

We agreed to develop a common core curricula on joint logistics to teach in our institutions and schools at the captain through the colonel level. We need more common language to use as a base between Services. We also need to introduce interoperability with interagencies and our coalition nations as part of the curriculum as well. We have already started on this path with the recent approval for the Center for Joint and Strategic Logistics Excellence at the National Defense University.

Another lesson learned is that our lines of communication are as important as ever. Operation Enduring Freedom has reminded us how challenging this can be. We continue to find means to reduce risk by establishing alternate routes.

**Q** *Part of the stated mission of J4 is to create a flexible joint logistics environment that can maximize the joint force commander's freedom of action—a focus on expanding the “art of the possible” for commanders. What is your primary means of communicating with the joint logistics community in providing this?*

**A** You hit on the primary objective of the joint logistics community: giving the joint force commander freedom of action. We communicate this through several arrangements and pro-



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cesses. One way we do this is through my Conference of Logistics Directors (COLD). At this conference, we bring in the directors of logistics from every combatant command, the chiefs of logistics from each of the Services, leadership from OSD, and our multinational partners. This year, we added our interagency partners. While each COLD conference has a theme that changes each year, we spend a majority of the time addressing the logistical requirements and challenges of the joint force commander. COLD sets the agenda for the joint logistics environment and serves as an annual rudder check for the community to make sure we are all operating in concert to enable the art of the possible for the joint force commander.

In addition to the COLD conference, I conduct quarterly senior-level video conferences to facilitate dialogue with our combatant command directors of logistics. This provides a venue to update our progress on initiatives that came out

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of COLD and also to discuss any mid-year changes that we need to make. Finally, my staff and I are in constant contact with combatant command directors of logistics and their staff, and I am pleased with how well we work together.

**Q** How do you define logistics visibility in a joint environment? What particular ob-

stacles do you need to overcome? How do you determine who gets what visibility and at what point in the process?

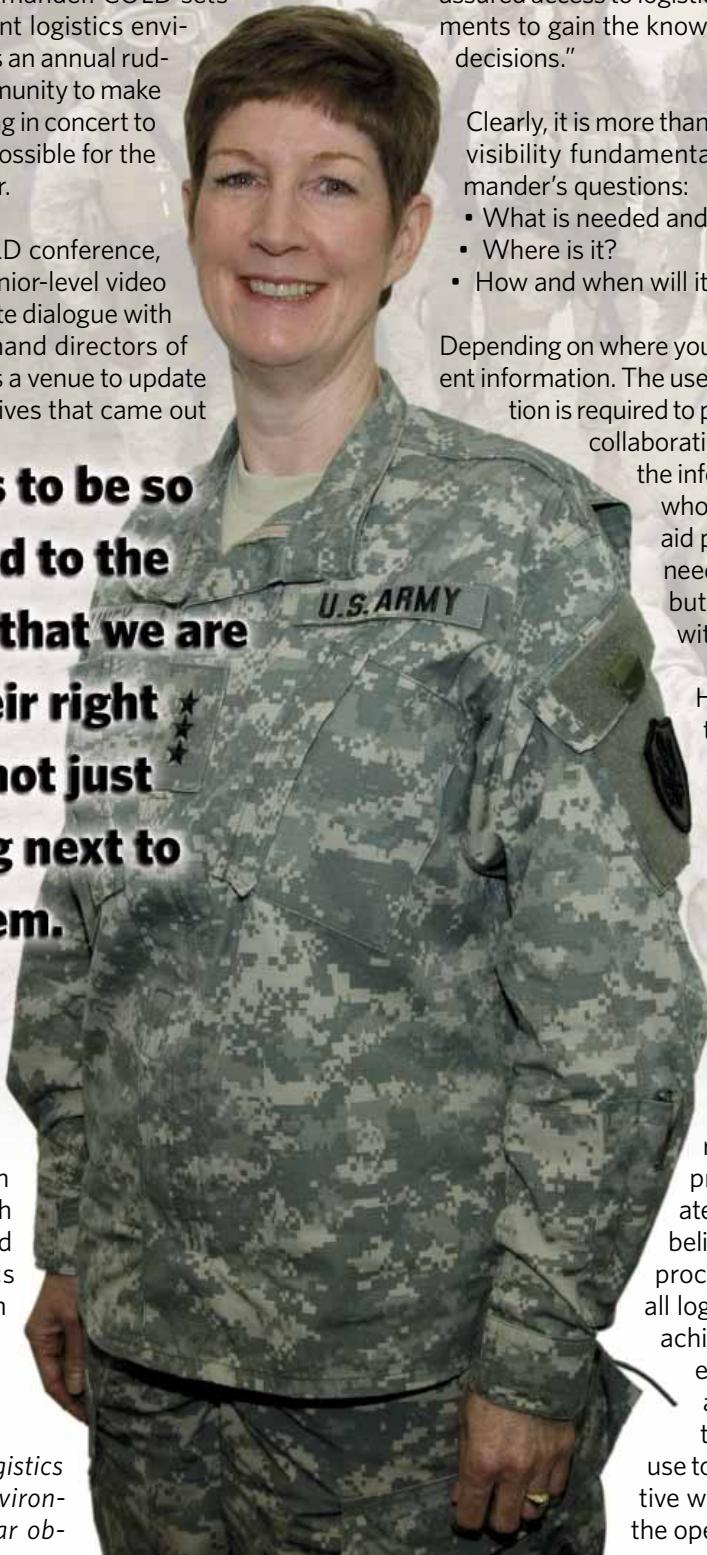
**A** This is a key issue. Let me draw upon the keystone doctrine for joint logistics publications that was recently signed by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In Joint Publication 4-0, *Joint Logistics*, we have defined joint visibility as “having assured access to logistic processes, resources, and requirements to gain the knowledge necessary to make effective decisions.”

Clearly, it is more than just having visibility of assets. Joint visibility fundamentally answers the combatant commander’s questions:

- What is needed and by when?
- Where is it?
- How and when will it get there?

Depending on where you are in the process, you need different information. The user determines what level of information is required to perform a specific function. Through collaboration, we can work with the owners of the information to share it with key parties who need the transparency to inform or aid part of the decision process. We do need to be conscious of security issues, but we can still achieve transparency with appropriate security measures.

However, we are not where we need to be from a visibility perspective. As senior logistics managers, planners, and system developers, we must make a concerted effort to enhance visibility for everyone within the community. We must ask ourselves, “What can I give people access to and what processes must I change to permit this access?” Our inclination is to withhold information and access and wait until someone asks, and then we share only the segment requested instead of changing our processes to provide the appropriate visibility. It begins with trust and a belief that transparency in each others’ processes and information will enable all logisticians to make better decisions, achieve effectiveness, and then target efficiencies. Visibility is not an end in and of itself, so we must determine the most appropriate source data to use to make decisions. It is also an objective we will continually strive toward. As the operational environment continues to





change, there will always be additional information requirements or demands for more comprehensive data timeliness and accuracy. As logisticians, we must improve the quality of our decisions so we can provide the joint warfighter more options.

**Q** *The complexity of joint operational logistics includes not only addressing the needs of all the Services, but also addressing multinational and interagency requirements. What are some of the lessons learned in managing such a diverse and complicated set of requirements?*

**A** We are still developing the lessons learned in this area, but what is clear is that the future fight involves our coalition and interagency partners. One challenge is that our systems and processes are not interoperable. If we are to truly optimize the attributes of all partners involved, we need to achieve interoperability. In a truly seamless logistics environment, a commander would have asset visibility throughout the region—regardless of to which Service, coalition partner, or agency he or she belongs. We are not there yet, but we have begun to work with NATO and discuss ways in which our IT systems can be integrated into NATO IT systems.

In order to have more interoperability between our international partners, I have liaison officers from the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada integrated into my staff on a full-time basis. Through this arrangement, we have made great strides in developing and promoting U.S. multinational logistics strategy. We are also in the process of establishing relationships with some of our interagency partners that have logistics equities in the joint theater. I am eager to develop this area of joint logistics. We have made some progress, and I want to build on that progress by taking us to a new level in combined and interagency joint logistics.

With regards to the Services, we have seen the benefit of leveraging the strengths of each of the Services, and we are working better than ever. However, we clearly see the need to have better visibility across the Services for requirements, excess capacity, and transparency in business processes. To get at this, the Service logistics chiefs, U.S. Transportation Command, combatant commanders' logistics chiefs, and the director of the Defense Logistics Agency have all agreed to work on three key areas. These are:

- A common end-to-end framework and measurement system for the logistics community
- Joint education for logisticians that will enable them to succeed in the interagency, joint, and combined environment
- Life cycle management.

**Q** *I understand that contractors on the battlefield are playing an increasing role in providing logistic support. Why has the num-*

*ber of contractors increased, and to what extent is J4 involved in developing guidance and planning procedures?*

**A** For short-duration contingencies, we are dependent on existing weapon systems support contracts and other vehicles such as Navy contracts that support shipboard requirements in a specific geographic region. As operations grow in scope and duration, the need for contractors increases significantly as the demand for commercial air and surface transportation airlift, communications, life support, and other support capabilities either exceeds capacity or a commercial contract is a more effective solution. We are almost totally dependent on contract support in operations requiring reconstruction.

Several trends have led to a dependency on contractors. In the early to mid-1990s, budgetary pressures and force size restrictions led DoD to reduce the number of military and civilian employees (particularly those performing operational support) and outsource many of these functions. As a result, organic capacity no longer exists in many instances. Additionally, our current weapons systems have increased in technical complexity, and we chose to purchase readiness agreements, which places the burden for supplies and maintenance on the original equipment manufacturer.

We are deeply involved in developing guidance and planning procedures for operational contract support. We are partnered with the assistant deputy under secretary of defense for program support and are utilizing a collaborative approach with the military departments, OSD staff, the Joint Staff, and combat support agencies. Three years ago, we had no joint policy and limited doctrinal guidance for management and oversight of contracted support and contractors on the battlefield. Working together, OSD and the Joint Staff have identified initial capability gaps and have assembled a community of practice to close shortfalls. To date, we are updating key policies, developing relevant operational contract support doctrine, providing geographic combatant commands and the Joint Forces Command with joint operational contract support planners, and deploying synchronized predeployment and tracker systems to attain visibility and accountability of contractor personnel in contingency operations.

While operational contract support has proven to be a significant force multiplier, it can be a tremendous challenge during major operations and requires significant pre-planning management early in the operational planning process. We have much work still to accomplish, especially in the area of integrating operational contract support into joint operational planning scenarios.

**Q** *Lt. Gen. Gainey, thank you for your time and for sharing your insights with our readers.*